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THE FAMILY AND THE LINEAGE

542 A CHILD born into this community has for the most intimate
612 companions of his babyhood the inmates of the hut in which
he lives. These will be, normally, his mother, his father, and his
full brothers and sisters, that is to say, his immediate 'family' in
our sense of the word, with, possibly, the addition of a grand-
parent. Indeed, taking it by and large, the child's relations to those
persons who constitute what may be called the kindred, i.e. his
two parents and the near relatives of both of them, do not, in
practice, differ very widely from those of our own children, except
that his mother's brother possesses authority denied to our
maternal uncles, and his mother's sister stands closer to him than
any but the most devoted of our aunts. But there is no word in
his dialect for this group of people, nor is this 'kindred' recognized
as a structural unit, though in practice it behaves as such. The
● 613 first group of people with which our Melanesian child will learn
to associate himself officially consists of his mother and all her
siblings, his mother's mother, if she be living, his own full brothers
and sisters, and the children of all the women just mentioned, but
not those of the men; in other words, those of his blood relations
who are of the same clan, the clan always passing through the
mother.

Following the example of Evans-Pritchard (1933, p. 30), I pro-
pose to call this group of people a *lineage*.¹ In the Petats dialect the
word for it is *piniposa*, in the Kurtatchi dialect *boa*, usually heard
[612] with a suffixed possessive, e.g. *boani*, my lineage. It must be borne
in mind that this term excludes all blood relations on the father's
side. For though the child is, throughout his early years and often
throughout his life, thrown into close and intimate contact with
his father and his father's brothers, sisters, and other relatives,
they are regarded as bound to him by ties which might perhaps be
called 'personal' rather than 'official'. For this reason, the white
man's rule that descendants shall line up behind the father for
census or inspection purposes is as puzzling to them as it would
be to us. [While Murdock (*American Anthropologist*, vol. 59, 1957, p. 168) lists
the Kurtatchi as having sibs, the definition here would also
include lineages in Murdock's sense - Analyst]

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be for us to be directed to fill up an official document using the maiden name of our mother in place of our own surname. 613●

THE CLAN

Beyond the inner ring formed by the lineage, there is an outer ring of persons with whom the child, as he grows older, will find himself in association. This outer ring embraces all those people belonging to the same clan as himself, wherever they may live. The collective word in the Petats dialect for the people standing to an individual in this wider association is *sugut*, and in the Kurtatchi dialect *wilti* (clan). But when persons included in this group are referred to individually, a Kurtatchi man will often use the same term as for members of his lineage, calling them *boanē* (meaning 'my clansmen'). It is usually perfectly clear from the context whether the word is being used in its wider or in its narrower sense, but if it is necessary to emphasize the distinction still more, he will explain the former as *pes wilti*, 'of one clan', and the latter as *boanē tsili*, or *boanē kuruts*, my 'real', or 'true' kinsfolk. 614

The child's association with his clansmen will depend, naturally, to some extent upon their place of residence. With those who live in the same village he feels himself more closely associated than with those who live afar off. But he applies the same term also to clansmen in other villages, and there is no doubt that the bond is a real, though rather vague one. It is, however, weaker to-day than in the olden time, since there is no longer any call to support one's clansmen in battle.

On visiting another village, a man will first of all seek out his clansmen, who will sponsor him during his stay. Those of his own sex whom he knows personally he calls *hiar*, even if there be no blood relationship between them. This term is also used in a narrower sense for those of his siblings who are of the same sex as himself. When inquiring about a man who was thus specified, but who did not appear anywhere in the speaker's genealogy, I often received the explanation 'He is not my real brother (*hiar tsili*), but we belong to the same clan (*pes wilti*)'. 574
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Throughout the whole area with which this book is concerned, there are at the present time two important clans. In most places they are designated Naboin and Nakarib. They are not, however, to be regarded as moieties indicating a dual organization, at any rate at the present time, because in some villages there are also 614

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614 informants now advanced in years, it cannot be the result of a break-
 582 down of the native system due to the influence of white contact. It is considered to be in order if the two parties to such a marriage belong to different villages, as is usually the case, since the custom is for the mate to be sought outside the village. But it occasionally happens that two people of the same clan marry even if they live in the same village, provided they do not belong to any of the prohibited relationships. It is clear that the tie of blood is considered more important than the clan, since the prohibited relationships are not confined to clansmen, as will be shown in a subsequent paragraph.

614 The children belong to the clan of their mother. To this rule
 [611] there is no exception, in the ordinary course of affairs. But if
 597 a clan is greatly diminished in numbers it may adopt an infant of another clan, with the consent of the clan to which the individual belongs by right of birth. For example, if a Nakanib woman has a child, and the Naboin people wish to adopt it, a man of importance of the Naboin clan makes a feast and gives the child its name. It is then said to belong to the Naboin clan, and can use the Naboin decoration, and, if a boy, frequents the men's house belonging to the Naboin people. The members of his new clan are expected to provide for him in future, and though his mother may continue, if she so desire, to give him food beyond the time of suckling, she is in no way bound to do so. She must not continue to care for him otherwise; this is the duty of the adopting clan, and would be undertaken by the women belonging to the lineage of the man who arranged the transaction and gave the child its name. For example,
 • [613] if the child has yaws, or one of the tropical sores no one ever escapes, the people of his original clan must not tend or wash him, but this must be done by the adopting clan. The adopting clan must also find the wherewithal to provide him with a wife. If a female child is thus adopted, the adopting clan must arrange the marriage. The currency provided by the husband's people is paid to them, but the clan into which she was born is given a little of it, the amount being arranged by mutual consent. When the time comes to make the feast which reciprocates the payment, the clan to which she originally belonged helps the clan which took her over. The adopting clan provides for the marriage of her children, but such children may, if they please, revert to their mother's original clan. Thus Tatum, the mother of Mataré, was born into the

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614 pointed out some that did not conform to type they said that those
826 were wrong, but did not attempt any explanation, nor did the
discrepancy appear to trouble them at all. One man said they must
have got the lines from their fathers.

[171] This belief is found also in Buin, in the extreme south of
Bougainville, where it was recorded by Thurnwald (1912, vol. i,
p. 536 and Tafe III). He gives drawings of three patterns, one
of which, for the Fish-eagle clan (*manugau*), corresponds exactly
to the drawing in Fig. 3 for the Naboin (Manu) people.

THE LINEAGE GROUP

• 613 The clan is, of course, made up of a number of lineage groups.
The separate lineage groups seem to have been, in the olden days,
far more self-contained than is the case at present, but even now
the lineage functions to some extent as a unit with its own internal
organization.

613 The child whose relations with his fellows we discussed at the
beginning of this chapter will be taught from his infancy to regard
604 as the person having most authority over him his mother's eldest
brother, whom he calls *tsoanē*, and who calls him *pasunē*. But this
man is himself under the authority of his own mother's eldest
living brother, as long as any survive. The actual head of the
lineage, therefore, is its eldest living male. The small child, how-
ever, will not at first realize this, since the man in question, his
[601] mother's mother's brother, calls him *tsubna'in*, 'grandson', and
shows him all the affectionate attention usual in this community
between grandparent and grandchild.

613 The members of a lineage will often be found living together in
a hamlet, on ground which they claim as the property of their clan.
621 As a result of the government policy of encouraging the natives
423 to group themselves together in larger villages, for greater ease of
supervision, the hamlet, which seems to have been originally the
local unit (and, in the mountain districts, still is), is now becoming
merged in the village, so that the lineage group no longer dominates
the situation as once it did. The older state of things is best
illustrated at Saposá, where the people are scattered over a number
of tiny islands. Each island was designated as the property of a
certain lineage group, in some cases for habitation, in some for
growing coco-nuts, in some for purposes of burial. At Leman-
manu, on the Lontis coast (NW. Buka), I was told that in the olden

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days the Manu people lived at Lemanmanu and the Kekeleo people at the neighbouring village of Lemankoa, a short distance along the coast. There was great enmity between the two villages, so that people from the one could not go inside the barricade of the other. Intermarriage never took place between them in those days, but now that there is no more fighting they intermarry and live in either the husband's village or the wife's village as they please.

It is not to be supposed that the hamlet was ever composed entirely of members of the lineage, since their spouses stood outside that group. The information at my disposal is not definite enough to show with certainty whether these people were, in the past, more inclined to be matrilineal than they now are, but there seems to be some likelihood that this was the case. This custom prevails, at the present time, to quite a considerable extent, but it appears to be, with certain reservations to be discussed later, a matter of personal preference whether a newly married couple take up their abode with the wife's people or with the husband's, i.e. whether marriage removes a member of the lineage from the hamlet, or adds to it an individual belonging to another clan. In the latter case, though individuals added by marriage form no part of the lineage group with which they are now affiliated by residence, they recognize the authority of the head of that group, without withdrawing their allegiance from the group which is theirs by birth. Sometimes other families connected with the new-comer will come and take up their residence in the hamlet in order to be near their kinsman. The hamlet, and still more the collection of hamlets which constitutes a village, is therefore composed of a number of individuals bound together by all or any of the varied ties of blood, of clan, of marriage, and of locality.

TSUNAUN AND COMMONERS

In each village or group of hamlets there is one lineage group which takes precedence of all the others. This lineage may belong to any clan, and the clan to which it belongs is considered the most important, and is generally the most numerous, in that village. It may be that this group originally formed the nucleus round which the village has grown. The head of such a lineage is called *tsunaun*.¹

¹ In order to avoid ambiguity I have retained the word *tsunaun* instead of translating it, since there is no single word which gives its sense exactly. 'Person of rank' or 'person of importance' would perhaps be a fair equivalent. No term

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613 The term applies not only to its actual head who is *tsunaun tʃan*
 621 (= great *tsunaun*), but to his potential successors, and to women
 565 whose children will be in the direct line of succession.

613 The succession is the same for both *tsunaun* and commoners, and
 565 is hereditary, in the female line, but with the proviso that all the
 613 males of one generation, if they live in the place, but not otherwise,
 565 become head of the lineage in order of their birth, before the
 succession passes to the eldest sister's eldest son. That is to say,
 a man's successor is his next younger brother (in our sense of the
 word), and so on until there are no more brothers living. Cases
 occur in my genealogies of the succession then passing to the son
 of the mother's sister, who is hardly differentiated from a blood
 brother, but it does not appear to pass to any of the other persons
 designated by the same classificatory term. The next in succession
 is the eldest son of the eldest sister, or, if she have none, of the
 next sister in age who has one. For this purpose the children of
 two sisters count as sisters. No case occurs in my genealogies of
 a lineal successor failing to be forthcoming, but I was told that if
 this should occur, the child of some other woman of the same
 clan would be chosen. The first heir of a new generation, i.e. the
 eldest son of the eldest sister, is called *wamoa* ('first-born') in
 the Kurtatchi dialect, and *got* in the Petats dialect.

613 Some concrete examples from my genealogies will serve to
 illustrate this rule of succession. It is the same for Petats as for
 Kurtatchi, and holds good, so far as my information extends,
 throughout the area. Pinari, *tsunaun* of the Nakarib people at
 Gomen (afterwards amalgamated with Kurtatchi), had inherited
 from his mother's brother Pasis, who followed an elder 'brother'
 Nau'uston (actually the son of his mother's elder sister). The other
 males of this generation are all dead. Pinari's eldest sister, Pari,
 had a son who died in adolescence, who would have been Pinari's
 heir had he lived. Failing him, the present heir is Kakari, eldest
 son of Matēy, the daughter of Pinari's mother's sister, ranking
 therefore as Pinari's sister. Next to him will come Sankuro, a son
 of a younger sister of Pinari, but in age between Kakari and Kakari's
 younger brother, Wakuis, who will follow Sankuro. Then will

is applied collectively to the people who are not *tsunaun*, but when it is required
 to emphasize the distinction a person will be described as *ti a pinpin*, a person of
 no importance, literally, in the expressive pidgin-English phrase, 'man nothing'.
 For these people I have used the term 'commoners'.

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come Wanas, *wamoa* of a new generation, son of Kakari's sister Rus. At the time of my visit Wanas was about four years old, already completely spoilt by the attention paid to him by virtue of his position.

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Belonging to the original village of Kurtatchi there is a *tsunaun* lineage of the Nakarib clan. Its head had been Murian, who had died some time before my period of residence. His younger brother had died before him, so the succession passed to Siani, the eldest son of Murian's mother's younger sister. It so happened that Murian and Siani had the same father, he having married two sisters, but this had no bearing on the succession. There are no more brothers, so the office will be handed on to the *wamoa*, Matsi, the son of Murian's eldest sister. Matsi is still a small boy. The first son of his adolescent sister, Nawi, will be *wamoa* of his generation, and will one day be the heir.

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I could get no information as to the origin of this difference between *tsunaun* and commoners. All discussions on the question elicited nothing but that they were *tsunaun* because they were related to people who had been *tsunaun* before them. The only information other than this was obtained from an old man at Tiop, who said that in olden times a man could be made *tsunaun* if he showed himself valiant in fighting. My visit to Tiop was brief, and I had no opportunity of checking this statement with other informants; I give his account therefore with this reservation. 'If a man had killed a great number of men, then it was decided that he should be made *tsunaun*. A raid was made on an enemy village, a prisoner was taken and brought back alive. His skin was cut until the blood flowed. The men who were already *tsunaun* washed the *tsunaun*-to-be in the prisoner's blood. This was done in the presence of all the people, so that all should know that he was *tsunaun*. The prisoner either died under this treatment or was killed, and the assembled people ate him in front of the principal house in the village. After this had been done, if the sister of the new *tsunaun* bore a child, he was *tsunaun* from birth, and so the rank was perpetuated.'

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Some *tsunaun* possessed, in the olden days, authority much wider than that over their own kindred or village. This extended authority seems to be bound up with the state of sporadic warfare that existed all the time, not only between the coast people and those of the interior, but also among the coast villages themselves.

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551 has an intimate connexion. Another woman is now called Tchina'-
 565 eviat; *eviat* is the word for the bamboo rod used in catching bonito,
 765 the connexion being that Sarumpots was engaged in bonito-fishing
 when the accident occurred. The name of Sobak, my next-door
 neighbour, means 'to make a grab at', as the shark does at its
 victim, and commemorates the same catastrophe. In cases of
 importance the old names seem to be dropped completely. I never
 succeeded in ascertaining what the names of these people had
 been before. All inquiries were side-stepped by the answer: 'No
 one uses it.'

551 As previously explained, these substitute names may be used
 by relatives who are not permitted to say the individual's personal
 name. The taboo on the names of certain relatives extends to the
 use of words which are the same as these names, for which some
 substitute must be found, either a circumlocution or a word from
 another dialect.

551 These taboos are falling into disuse in consequence of contact
 177 with the white man. Most of the people at Petats showed no
 hesitation in saying the names of their taboo relatives when giving
 me their genealogies, but at Kurtatchi they either gave me a substi-
 tute name or the name of the relationship, or asked some one
 standing by to say the forbidden word. One man, finding himself
 alone with me, having occasion to speak of his brother's wife,
 whose name he should not say, whispered: 'She is my *wagun*, but
 I'll steal her name and say it quietly.'

[591] The whole system of substituting or changing names is destined
 to disappear in the near future by reason of the introduction of
 the Government census. 'Name e stop along paper belong white
 man, no can loose im.'

SUMMARY

612 The outstanding characteristics of the structure of this society
 • 613 may be summarized as follows: The kindred, comprising the
 591 mother and the father, the siblings of both, and their children, is
 the unit of which the individual is most aware in relation to the
 ordinary give-and-take of everyday life. In general, the tie between
 the individual and his relatives on the mother's side of the house
 (his lineage) is the stronger, but much depends upon whether the
 individual is living in the mother's or the father's village. This is
 to some extent a matter of his parents' choice, but if one individual

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of a married couple is of more importance than the other, the spouse will take up residence in the village of the partner who has the higher status. In any case, the kindred, as defined above, counts for more than the clan. 81 612 613 591

The recognized social unit is the lineage, its head is the eldest living male, hence it follows that the person to whom an individual looks as the one officially in authority over him is his mother's eldest living brother. Some lineage groups take precedence of the rest; their members are known as *tsunam*, and the head of such a group is a person of great authority, though now possessing less than in the olden days. 565 604 613

For the reckoning of descent and succession the mother's side of the house is all-important, the father's side completely ignored, i.e. the community is in this respect exclusively matrilineal. But in the case of inheritance of personal property, either in goods or in knowledge, the society is both matrilineal and patrilineal, that is to say, a man can bequeath such property to his son or to his sister's son, or divide it between them, as he pleases. 428 611

Throughout the area there are two main clans, but others, smaller in numbers, though not considered as subdivisions, occur: the names and number of these small clans differ in different districts. With each clan is associated some creature, usually, but not always, a bird, but the association now amounts to little more than that of name, though it may once have been more important. The significance of the clan as a social unit seems to have declined considerably with the abolition of warfare. 614 727

Marriage is normally exogamous, but exceptions to this rule seem always to have occurred not infrequently. The important thing is to avoid persons with whom direct relationship can be traced either through the mother or through the father, marriages between cousins and the children of cousins being strongly taboo. (This applies to both parallel and cross-cousins.) The bride is preferably obtained from another village. 582

The relationship system is a 'classificatory' one, comparable with those found in other parts of Melanesia, with strong taboos regulating social intercourse between certain persons. The most important of these are their regulations applying to the wife's mother-daughter's husband relationship, and to that between the parents of husband and the parents of wife. These restrictions are lifted under certain circumstances. 601 606